

LANDMARKS

A PUBLICATION OF THE D.C. OFFICE OF PLANNING/HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

WINTER 2008



Government of the District of Columbia Adrian M. Fenty, Mayor



IN THIS ISSUE:

MAYOR'S AWARDS
HONOR EXCELLENCE
IN HISTORIC
PRESERVATION 1

FIVE-YEARS HISTORIC
PRESERVATION PLAN
RELEASED 1

GREETINGS FROM
THE SHPO 2



BARNEY CIRCLE
ARCHAEOLOGICAL STUDY
RESURRECTED 3

DC HISTORIC PRESERVATION
OFFICE RELEASES TWO NEW
BROCHURES 3

COMMUNITY OUTREACH
UPDATE 4

NEW DC HISTORIC
DESIGNATIONS 4

MAYOR'S AWARDS HONORS EXCELLENCE IN HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The D.C. Office of Planning's Historic Preservation Office presented winners of the Sixth Annual Mayor's Awards for Excellence in Historic Preservation at the historic Carnegie Institution for Science auditorium on Thursday, November 6. The event was co-hosted by the DC Preservation League with corporate sponsorship provided by Akridge, The Louis Berger Group, Inc. and Smith Group.



Photo Credit: Blecka Drake



Photo Credit: Blecka Drake

Historic Preservation Review Board Chairman Tersh Boasberg's Award for Law and Public Policy was presented to District of Columbia Council Chairman Vincent C. Gray at the 2008 preservation awards program on November 6.

Highlighting the event were the Historic Preservation Review Board Chairman's Award for Law and Public Policy to D.C. Council Chairman Vincent C. Gray and the Individual Lifetime Achievement Award to longtime Dupont Circle resident and preservationist Charles J. Robertson, III

A total of 12 awards were presented to individuals, businesses, and local organizations for exemplary work and commitment to his-
continued on page 2

FIVE-YEAR HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN RELEASED

The District of Columbia Historic Preservation Office recently released *Preserving Communities and Character: The Historic Preservation Plan for the District of Columbia 2008-2012*, the five-year plan prepared by HPO to identify preservation goals for the District. The development of a plan every five years is one of the requirements of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 administered by the Department of the Interior's National Park Service.

Preserving Communities and Character outlines the policies needed to identify, protect, and capitalize on the city's historic resources, and the plan also provides a framework for implementation and integration of the District's preservation activities. Developed simultaneously with the update of the city's Comprehensive Plan, this final document reflects comments received during the public

continued on page 3

This publication was funded through a U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service Historic Preservation Fund grant.



Harriet Tregoning
Director

Jennifer Steingasser
Deputy Director

David Maloney
State Historic Preservation Officer

Stephen Callcott
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

HPO STAFF:

Anne Brockett
Architectural Historian

Toni Cherry
Senior Historic Preservation Inspector

Joyetta Delaney
Staff Assistant

Tim Dennée
Architectural Historian

Michael Beidler
Preservation Architect

Patsy Fletcher
Community Outreach Coordinator

Johanna Hernandez
Receptionist

Michael Johnson
Graphic Design

Keith Lambert
Preservation Inspector

C. Andrew Lewis
Senior Historic Preservation Specialist

Jonathan Mellon
Historic Preservation Specialist

Brendan Meyer
Historic Preservation Specialist

Amanda Molson
Historic Preservation Specialist

Shagun Raina
Assistant Archaeologist

Eldra Walker
Historic Preservation Specialist

Kim Williams
National Register Coordinator

Bruce Yarnall
Operations and Grants Manager

For more information about
District of Columbia historic
preservation programs contact:

Government of the District of Columbia
Office of Planning
Historic Preservation Office
801 North Capitol Street, NE
Suite 3000
Washington, D.C. 20002
(202) 442-8800
planning.dc.gov/hp

GREETINGS FROM THE SHPO

In November it was my great honor to receive from the Patterson House Preservation Foundation the 2008 Stanford White Award for 30 years of public service in preservation in the District of Columbia. The occasion gave me the opportunity to read up on White, the architect of the Patterson House and one of America's premier designers, and to reflect upon the lessons I might learn from his career.

Stanford White, I discovered, was blessed with raw artistic talent and a dazzling decorative sense. His was the kind of gift you are born with, and few can count themselves so lucky. He was hired on as the junior partner in a young architectural firm in part because he could draw in the days when architectural presentation was all about free-hand rendering. But if McKim, Mead & White went on to make their reputation as – and always insisted on being considered – an entity, what of the other partners?

The senior partner, Charles F. McKim, was



David Maloney, *State Historic Preservation Officer*

Photo Credit: HPO

sober and learned – a product of the rigorous classical education at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. A Pennsylvania Quaker, he was intensely interested in preserving the nation's colonial architecture, which was fast disappearing by the 1880s. William Rutherford Mead, the even-tempered middle partner, was by all accounts the mediator who kept the two centrifugal forces of McKim and White together. Pragmatic and perhaps a bit uninspired as a designer, he was a taciturn Vermont Yankee who said so little around the office that he is said to have earned the nickname "Dummy."

But something about their partnership made McKim, Mead & White the largest and most successful architectural firm of their day. They had an enormous influence on the direction of architecture at the turn of the last century.

What can we learn from their legacy? Well, their work was first of all about memory. Without memory we lose our moorings, and even our sense of who we are. That recognition is the basis of historic preservation, as it was for an architecture based on classicism and the revival of past styles. McKim, Mead & White were certainly traditionalists, but they were not just copyists. Rather, they reinterpreted memory in the search for a classicism that was right for America.

In the modern sense, McKim, Mead & White were architectural contextualists. What they designed for Boston was different from

continued on page 4

Mayor's Awards continued from page 1

toric preservation The 2008 honorees include the following:

Excellence in Design - Restoration/Renovation and New Construction

- *The Columbia Residences of Washington, DC* - 2425 L Street, NW Shalom Baranes Associates, PC; Bovis Lend Lease; Trammell Crow Company; EHT Tracerics, Inc.
- *The Juniper Condominiums* - 531 T Street, NW Zahn Design Architects; T Street Associates, LLC; Radwan Associates; G. Worsley Associates; FEN Enterprises, Rettler Corporation
- *Parker Flats at Gage School* - 2035 Second Street, NW Bonstra | Haresign Architects LLP; Urban Realty Advisors/Monument Realty; EHT Tracerics, Inc.; Oehrlein & Associates Architects; James G. Davis Construction; Howard University Community Association

Excellence in Public Education

- *Dr. Carroll R. Gibbs*
- *"East of the River: Continuity and Change"* Exhibit Smithsonian Anacostia Community Museum

Excellence in Archeology

- *Rock Creek Park Archeological Study* National Park Service - National Capital Region; Rock Creek Park; The Louis Berger Group, Inc.

Excellence in Stewardship

- *William L. Slayton House* 3411 Ordway Street, NW Dan Snyder and Thomas Breit

State Historic Preservation Officer's Award

- *Foxhall Historic District Designation* Foxhall Village Citizens Association

Excellence in Design - Restoration and Renovation

- *1441 Swann Street*, NW Susan Fulton; Hains Architects; Antezana Construction; Kelsey & Associates
- *Lincoln Cottage and Visitor Education Center* - 3700 North Capitol Street, NW The Christman Company; National Trust for Historic Preservation; RMJM Hillier; Mona Electric Group; Oak Grove Restoration Company; Strickland Fire Protection

continued on page 3

Mayor's Awards continued from page 2

Historic Preservation Review Board Chairman's Award for Law and Public Policy:

- Vincent C. Gray, Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia

Individual Lifetime Achievement

- Charles J. Robertson, III. ❖

Five Year HP Plan continued from page 1

participation process and thus addresses the priorities of a wide range of preservation interests from across Washington. The document serves a useful guide in ongoing efforts to protect and celebrate the character and individuality of each neighborhood and community.

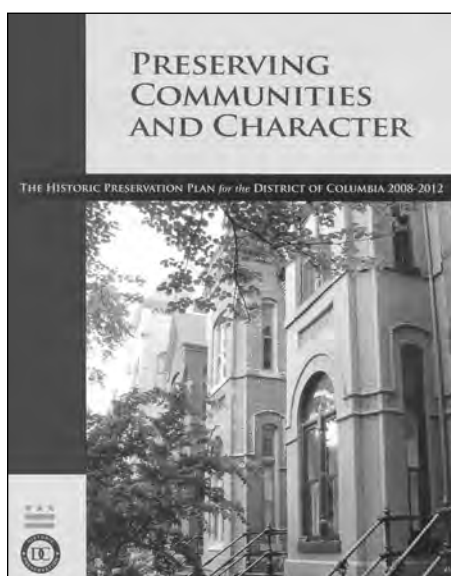


Photo Credit: HPO

Preserving Communities and Character

An electronic copy of the 36-page document is accessible on the Office of Planning website at: <http://planning.dc.gov/hp> Select "Brochures and Publications" then "HPO Guides, Reports, and Publications." Individual print copies may be obtained from HPO by calling 202.442.8800 or by e-mail request to johanna.hernandez@dc.gov.

Development and production of the plan was funded in part with federal funds from the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service. ❖

BARNEY CIRCLE ARCHAEOLOGICAL STUDY RESURRECTED

Dr. Ruth Troccoli, state archaeologist for the District of Columbia, has received preliminary word that a Transportation Equity Act (TEA-21) grant application to complete the Barney Circle Freeway study will receive funding.

In the 1970s, the Federal Highway Administration and DDOT initiated planning for a highway link that was never constructed between the Southeast Freeway and the I-295/Anacostia Freeway. The proposed highway crossed terraces of the Anacostia River that have high potential for buried prehistoric and historic archaeological sites. Initial survey work in 1981, 1984 and 1989 were followed by investigations in the 1990s that determined there were four sites in the project corridor that are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Data recovery excavations were conducted at those sites but shortly thereafter, funding for the project was revoked and reports of the excavations were never completed.

TEA-21 funding will allow HPO to complete this project. It will include a final technical report that summarizes and integrates the findings from all the sites into a comprehensive study of prehistoric life on the Anacostia River. A public version of the report, suitable for general readers, and a short volume suitable for children will also be produced. ❖

DC HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE RELEASES TWO NEW BROCHURES

The District of Columbia Historic Preservation Office is pleased to announce the release two new brochures as part of its Historic Preservation series. Publication of *Schools for All: A History of DC Public School Buildings 1804-1960* and the *Shaw Historic District* brochures brings to 21 the number of brochures related to local history and historic preservation produced by the office.

The 24-page *Schools for All* brochure, written by Kim Williams, HPO National Register coordinator, provides a comprehensive history of public school buildings and their development in the District of Columbia based on several studies of approximately 175 extant schools in the city. A number of these buildings have been designated as DC landmarks and listed in the National Register

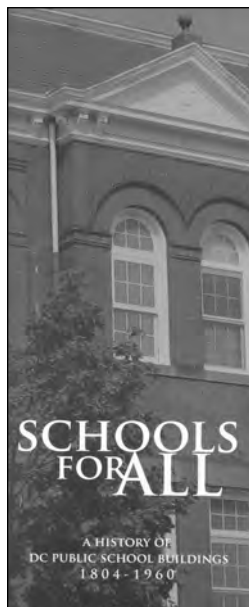


Photo Credit: HPO

Schools for All

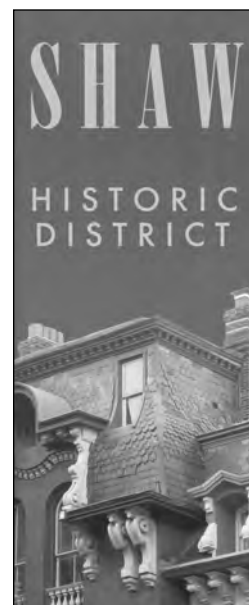


Photo Credit: HPO

Shaw Historic District

introduction to the brochure notes that "unlike many of Washington's neighborhoods, Shaw was not fashioned by developers who built strings of nearly identical rowhouses. Rather, Shaw was settled by individuals who constructed their own single dwellings of frame and brick, which were later infilled with small rows of developer-built speculative housing." The brochure details the early ethnically and economically diverse neighborhood as home to European immigrants, free African Americans and later freedmen through the tremendous social upheaval and architectural losses during the later 20th century, especially following the civil disturbances of 1968. Today, Shaw, named for Colonial Robert Gould Shaw, leader of the all-black 54th Massachusetts Regiment, "remains a strong community replete with varied residential construction." The community was formally recognized with designation as a District of Columbia historic district in 1999.

Individual print copies of the *Schools for All* and *Shaw Historic District* brochures may be obtained from HPO by calling 202.442.8800 or sending an e-mail request to johanna.hernandez@dc.gov.

Development and production of these brochures were made possible by a Historic Preservation Fund matching grant from the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service.

Other brochures in the series include Anacostia, Capitol Hill, Cleveland Park, Dupont Circle, Foggy Bottom, Georgetown, Greater 14th Street and Logan Circle, Kalorama Triangle, LeDroit Park, Massachusetts Avenue, Mount Pleasant, Mount Vernon Square, Sheridan-Kalorama, Sixteenth Street, Strivers Section, Takoma Park, and Woodley Park. Electronic copies may be downloaded from the office website at <http://planning.dc.gov/hp>. ❖

of Historic Places for architectural, historical and/or cultural reasons. While many of these buildings are still operating as public schools, others have taken on new life and new uses while retaining the characteristic original features. *Shaw Historic District*, also at 24 pages, was written by HPO architectural historian Anne Brockett. The

COMMUNITY OUTREACH UPDATE

by Patsy Fletcher

“Outsiders are always coming into our community and telling us what we need to save.” Some version of this statement is frequently uttered by community leaders when presented with the work of preservation. This seems especially true when a developer is out ahead of the preservationists and has already tantalized the neighborhood with promises of grand amenities for that decaying building that has been a blight in the community or has been folded into another structure and is long forgotten or obscured. And then here WE come, saying that it has historic significance and needs to be preserved. Preserve WHAT? This is especially touchy when the place perhaps had a dark history. “I don’t have any fond memories of that place because I was not allowed to go in. Tear



Patsy Fletcher,
Community Outreach
Coordinator

Photo Credit: HPO

it down!” But if we are all Washingtonians, doesn’t the history belong to all of us and don’t we have the right to advance what we think is important whether we live in the community or not, whether the history was exclusionary or not?

There is always the danger of being a little too eager on a community’s behalf. However, in conversations with community members about the neighborhood’s history, inevitably a building or two are mentioned and the great doings associated with them. There may be some deeper history connected with the place that most residents are not aware of but when learned of makes the shabby joint all the more lovable. This was certainly true in the case of the Strand Theater in Deanwood that turned out to be the first purpose-built neighborhood silent theater built east of the river and the last one built in the city. However, the point is to get residents to revisit the history they know and build upon that so that they can truly own what is important to them and what is not.

In Woodridge, for example, a committee of Civic Association members is cataloging historic sites and in the process has discovered a much older history than what is readily apparent. Utterances of “designation,” “landmarks,” and other preservationist-type terms are slipping out without the imposition of

“outsiders.” Residents of Eastland Gardens in Northeast are discovering that many of their homes were designed and constructed by African American architects and builders. Without the feeling of being dictated to, many are curious about what it would really mean to live in an historic district. This interest is being generated from within and not by some interloper with outside motives.

So, I guess I am making a couple of points. First, communities can (and should) be engaged in exploring and identifying landmarks that are important to them. Second, suggested landmarks are important to all of us as they reveal some aspect of the rich history that is Washington and as such are there really outsiders? And maybe there is a third point – and that is, perhaps instead of rejecting outright a suggestion by a non-resident of a community that there might be a place in that community of historical significance that warrants designation, take a moment to check it out and learn something! ❖

SHPO continued from page 2

New York, and like the Patterson House, for Washington it was different still. They expressed the essence of the place, but also the place of the building in the hierarchy of urban life. It was this devotion to context that made them dedicated urbanists. Classicism was a means of bringing order to cities – of expressing a civil society and civic virtues. They were interested in making public places – whether at Columbia University, Pennsylvania Station, or the National Mall. Even the Patterson House is as much about fashioning Dupont Circle as it is about crafting a fine residence for its owners.

And finally, their work was the product of collaboration – among themselves and with others. As the prototype of a modern architectural firm, the partners were in charge, but their designs were executed by chief draftsmen and an army of assistants. They actively collaborated with sculptors and artists – at the Adams Memorial in Rock Creek Cemetery, for example, where the statue is Saint-Gaudens, but the setting is Stanford White. Perhaps their greatest collaboration was with the wealthy clients and philanthropists who made so much of their work possible.

Memory, context, collaboration – these are the same issues that preservationists deal with today. We try to keep history alive, look for appropriate design, work in “public-private partnerships.” In spite of the current wave of formulaic glass boxes, we in Washington are

blessed to have architects of exceptional talent, a development community that understands the benefits of preservation, and an army of dedicated volunteers and civic leaders. Like McKim, Mead & White, we live in an era of transformative change, at the turn of another century. We need the good sense to be pragmatic, and to reinvent our inheritance for a new generation. I hope that at the same time we will not forget the heritage of our place, and strive for an architecture and urbanism that is wholly and uniquely Washington.❖

NEW DC HISTORIC DESIGNATIONS

SEPTEMBER 2008
THROUGH NOVEMBER 2008

The following designations to the District of Columbia Inventory of Historic Sites were approved by the Historic Preservation Review Board. All approved nominations will be forwarded to the National Park Service for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

National Register Listings

Billy Simpson’s House of Seafood and Steaks

3815 Georgia Avenue, NW

Designated September 25, 2008

Sponsor: Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4C

John Phillip Sousa Middle School

36590 Ely Place, SE

Designated October 23, 2008

Sponsor: District of Columbia Public Schools

Petworth Gardens (Webster Gardens) Apts.

124-130 Webster Street, NW

Designation September 25, 2008

Sponsors: Somerset Development Company and THC Affordable Housing, Inc.

Robert Gould Shaw Junior High School

1616 Marion Street, NW

Designated September 25, 2008

Sponsor: DC Preservation League

Third Baptist Church

1546 5th Street, NW

Designated September 25, 2008

Sponsor: Third Baptist Church

